
From the Office of Secretary of the State Susan Bysiewicz

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For Immediate Release

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VOTE ON ELECTION DAY, REGISTER BY OCT. 19

New young and minority voters targeted for turnout

Secretary of the State Susan Bysiewicz announced a major statewide voter registration effort at a State Capitol press conference. Under state law, October 19 is the voter registration deadline for Election Day, November 2.

Bysiewicz along with a number of civic partners said much of this year's focus is targeted at registering new young and minority voters, which are consistently underrepresented in the election process.

"Many elections are decided by just a handful of votes and we are getting the message out that every vote is important," Bysiewicz said. "Every voter can make a difference by choosing the leaders of their community, our state and our country."

Bysiewicz' office has recorded English/Spanish radio and television public service announcements and placed newspaper ads to encourage voter registration and turnout. In addition, partnering newspapers are distributing over 500,000 voter registration forms as inserts.

"Now more than ever the Latino vote has the potential to decide the outcome of the elections nationwide," said Latino & Puerto Rican Affairs Commission Executive Director Fernando Betancourt. "If we want to keep a vibrant democratic society, we have to encourage all sectors of our community to engage in our political system."

New voter drives will continue in the coming weeks led by various organizations including schools, churches, government agencies and businesses.

For example Connecticut VOTES~Connecticut VOTA, a partnership of 56 organizations statewide, has registered more than 7,200 new voters since May.

“This collective effort is revitalizing our democracy by encouraging citizens throughout Connecticut to get off the sidelines and participate in the democratic process,” said Democracy Works Executive Director Joyce Hamilton. “The drive has uncovered a strong desire to vote among people who previously had not been reached by ordinary voter registration procedures.”

Bysiewicz’ office has also led voter drives targeting young voters at high schools, concerts and UConn football games. As of August 30, over 31,000 new 18-24 year old voters have been registered in Connecticut this year.

"The challenge today is not new, as we encourage men and women, young and old to take part in the voting process," said League of Women Voters of Connecticut President Enid Oresman. "The League is a moderate voice on a wide range of issues, but a passionate voice on the need to vote."

Also joining Bysiewicz at the press conference were Registrars of Voter Assoc. President Richard Abbate and Connecticut NAACP President Scot Esdaile.

Registration forms are available from local Registrars of Voters or designated state agencies such as Department of Motor Vehicles offices. Forms can also be downloaded from the Secretary of the State's website at www.sots.state.ct.us

"One of the most patriotic things we can each do as citizens and as role models for our children is to vote and encourage others to vote," said Bysiewicz. "By casting a ballot you not only show support for your candidate, but also for the veterans and troops who put their lives on the line to protect the freedoms we enjoy in this country."

About 80% of eligible voters in Connecticut are currently registered. The Federal Elections Commission ranked Connecticut third in the nation in voter turnout during the 2000 presidential election with almost 78 percent of registered voters casting ballots.

For more information on registering to vote or hosting a voter registration drive call your town Registrar of Voters or the Office of the Secretary of the State at (800) 540-3764.

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